



State of California
Respiratory Care Board

444 North 3rd Street, Suite 270
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone (916) 323-9983
Fax (916) 323-9999
www.rcb.ca.gov



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Inquiry: Can RCP's do Breath sounds, Heart Rate, Resp. Rate and Pallor in homecare without a doctor's order for physical assessment? It will be part of a Clinical Verbal Assessment in the disease management.

Response: It is definitely within the scope of a licensed respiratory care practitioner to perform a physical assessment on a patient in order to determine their baseline or progress of an ordered treatment modality or care plan. Data gathering is an essential part of our work and is required to make informed decisions about patient care.

To further improve this concept I would encourage you and your department to development specific disease management protocols that allow practitioners to respond therapeutically to defined clinical indicators in order that patient care does not get delayed when the physician is not readily available. This approach is well documented in many clinical studies as the preferred method for improving patient outcomes and care.

Reference #: 2005-C-19